

FORTUNE GOES UP IN A STABLE FIRE

Downey's Loss Is Placed at
a Hundred Thousand.

COSTLY VEHICLES BURNED

Ambassadors and Senators Lose Their
Equipages—Electric Light Wire
Starts Blaze.

One hundred and forty horses, many of which were thoroughbreds, were released, and driven pell-mell into L Street, between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Streets northwest, yesterday. They created a panic among the several thousand persons who were attracted to Downey's stables, 1822-23 L Street northwest, by a fire, which originated from a defectively insulated electric wire, and which did \$100,000 damage.

No one was injured, and all of the animals were finally corralled by policemen, firemen, and citizens, and tied up in vacant lots.

Many carriages and private equipages, belonging to members of the Diplomatic Corps and the United States Senate, were in the building, when the fire occurred, and every one of them was destroyed. Downey lost 200 vehicles of his own.

The fire was discovered by a stable hand at 11:30 a. m., and firemen battled with the flames until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, before extinguishing them.

Rube Waddell, the pitcher of the Philadelphia American League baseball team, assisted the firemen in fighting the flames.

Some Delay.

There was some unfavorable comment and criticism from spectators, because of the delay, on the part of the firemen, in getting water on the fire. A street car knocked down one of the bridges erected over the tracks to carry the hose over the cars, so as to prevent blocking traffic. When the bridge fell the hose was detached from a plug. This caused the delay.

Commissioner Macfarland, who was attending church, left, and went to the scene of the fire. He made an investigation into the delay, and satisfied himself that the firemen did all they could. Major Sylvester, Lieutenant Boyle, and Sergeant Doyle, together with reserves from all of the police precincts in the city, preserved order.

A handsome carriage, just completed for the French ambassador, was stored in the stable. The vehicle is said to have cost upward of \$5,000. It was burned to ashes, together with the private conveyances of Senators Wetmore, Dryden, Representative Hitt, Senator Fairbank and Mrs. Westinghouse. Mr. Downey's assortment of fine traps, victorias, coupes and tallyhoes were also destroyed.

Heavy Losses.

Mr. Downey, today, said the amount of stock consumed by the flames was valued at \$50,000, on which he had \$30,000 insurance, making his loss \$20,000.

The amount of loss which is said to have fallen on the parties having hand-some carriages in the stable is estimated at \$25,000 or \$30,000. Mr. Downey has \$10,000 insurance on the building, which will at likelihood have to be rebuilt from the ground. He was doing business today. The fire insurance companies involved were the Aetna, Potomac, Hamburg, Royal, Colonial, and Phoenix.

Stopped Services.

At the time of the discovery of the fire services were being held in the Shiloh Baptist Church, which adjoins the stable on the left. The roar of the flames, yelling of the stable hands, and noise made by the firemen and their apparatus disturbed the services. The Rev. J. C. Taylor was reading his text at the time, but did not stop. After finishing the reading he informed the congregation that it was safer on the outside, and after pronouncing benediction and exhorting a hope that the edifice would be saved, he dismissed the congregation.

While one of the stable hands in Mr. Downey's employ was on the fourth floor of the building wiping off a carriage, he heard a spatter and crackling and after some time smelled smoke. He investigated and found that the eaves had been set afire by the electric wire. He sent out the alarm. Realizing that there was not a moment to waste in running to a fire alarm box, Mr. Downey reached to the alarm bell and turned it in an alarm from the stable. The alarm was sent to engine company 1, at Seventeenth and K Streets northwest, just back of the stable. Members of this command were on the scene in a moment. A pedestrian passing along K Street saw the flames issuing from the southwest part of the roof of the building and turning in an alarm from Sixteenth and M Streets.

General Alarm.

Mr. Downey called his men, formed a bucket brigade, and worked manfully, but could not extinguish the blaze because of the headway it had gained. The foreman of No. 1 company turned in another alarm. When the other fire engines responded and Chief Wagner saw the serious nature of the conflagration he sounded three other alarms, which brought out almost every piece of fire-fighting apparatus and every fireman in the district.

Engine companies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Fire Chief Belt appeared after No. 1 Engine Company arrived, and turned in the general alarm. Speaking of the fire today he said:

Chief Belt's View.

"I saw that volume of smoke coming from the building and knew it meant business. It was exactly like the one which came from Stump's furniture store and burned the building to the ground in seventeen minutes."

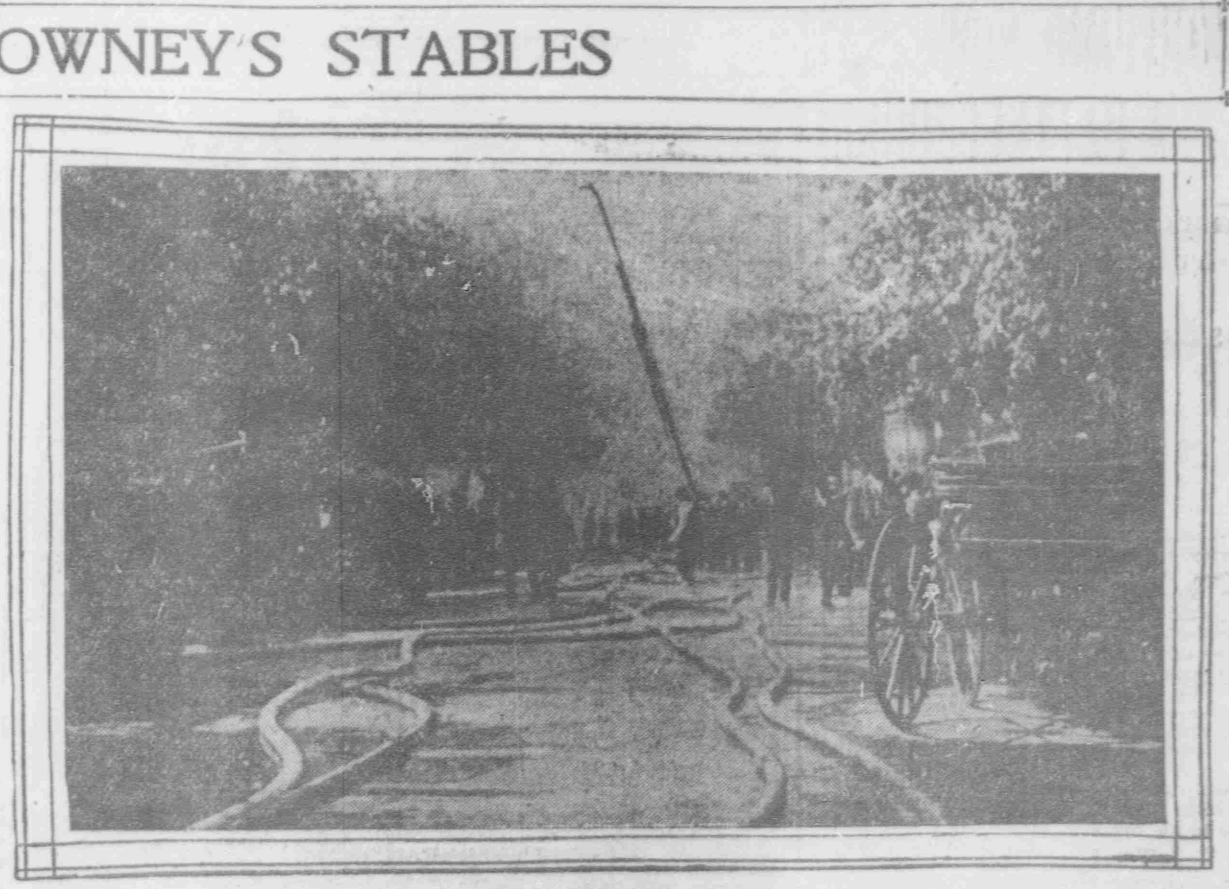
"Members of No. 1 Engine Company are deserving of the highest praise for the good work. The foreman is to be commended for turning in the alarm for assistance so promptly. Had he not done so when he did a few other houses would have been burned to the ground. The members of the command got right in between the fire on the fourth and third floors and worked as they never did before. The hose and which they took was the most important of all and they did good work. In all there were 125 firemen on the scene, and I never saw them work more intelligently, effectively, or quicker in my life."

Chief Belt took entire command of the forces and directed the working, assigning the men where they could do the most good. A portion of the fire Department was stationed in the alley in the rear of the stable, so as to prevent the destructive flames from spreading to K Street houses.

Lieutenant Boyle, Sergeant Doyle, and a number of policemen rescued the



COMMISSIONER MACFARLAND LOOKING ON.



WATER TOWN IN ACTION.

horses. The frenzied animals refused to leave the building. As a final resort the rescuers beat them out with clubs and whips. Lap robes, blankets, and bags were thrown over the heads of the most troublesome ones and they were led out by their manes.

Great quantities of expensive harness were also carried out by the police and spectators.

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